

I stood last week and talked to individuals who work for American Airlines, who are really concerned and frustrated, who love working with American Airlines but are now receiving a mandate coming down on them that they are digging in and saying: I am not going to do it. I have already had COVID. I have recovered. I have natural immunity. Why am I being asked to do this as well?

And they are getting only that the President is mandating it, and: We do Federal work, and so it is going to be required.

It is the same thing happening to packing companies, to manufacturers, to small businesses around the country.

Let me just read you a story. One employee who called our office last week is currently in cancer treatment for the fourth time and is receiving an experimental treatment. She is being told that she will be terminated from her job November 24 if she doesn't get vaccinated, because the President is requiring it on everyone.

That does not sound like an accommodation that is occurring because of medical accommodations.

It is nice to say in DC: Talk to the people in your State what is actually happening on the ground.

All of this push that is happening around healthcare workers all around the country, what does that really look like?

When we talked to an administrator of one of our nursing homes. Most of the individuals in our nursing homes, thankfully, as residents and as staff, have been vaccinated; but some have had COVID, and they are concerned about getting the vaccine. Whether that is rational or not, that is where they are, but they have natural immunity.

This particular nursing home that we talked to, 20 percent of her employees have said that they will not take the vaccine. This particular nursing home in a rural area will close and expose all of those residents and their families to chaos because Biden said: I am losing patience.

It is one thing to say we need to be able to push back on this pandemic. I absolutely agree. It is another thing to irrationally close down nursing homes that are taking care of patients that, by the way, were filled with people—frontline workers—who put their life at risk last year to serve people.

And now to push those people out and fire them this year?

"You are welcome," apparently, is what the President should be saying to them.

All I am asking for is reason. All I am asking for is to consider those 44 million Americans who have natural immunity and to accept what we all know scientifically to be true. All I am asking for is real medical exemptions. That is not irrational. All I am asking for is real religious accommodations.

Those are things that should be straightforward, common sense, and

doable. But for whatever reason, the train is barreling down the tracks. In the debris field is our Federal workers, individuals who work in private companies, healthcare workers across the board.

I, just this weekend, received an email that was a long email from a very shy physician in one of our major hospitals in Tulsa. She told me flat out: I don't seek personal attention. I don't do media stuff.

In fact, she said: I don't even have social media at all.

But she detailed out her healthcare decisions and what was going on in her own life and said: I do not want to receive this vaccine.

As a physician at a major hospital in Tulsa, she is about to lose her job because President Biden's patience is running thin.

What do her patients do next?

Mr. President, don't play chicken with our families. This is real to them. They do not need to lose their job because they have medical conditions, religious accommodations, or they have natural immunity. They have suffered through COVID once, and now you are going to fire them for that?

Let's have a real dialogue, not a rushed "My patience is wearing thin." With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Louisiana.

REMEMBERING MICHAEL B. ENZI

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I wanted to say a couple of words about a couple of friends.

I really miss Mike Enzi. I am referring, of course, to Senator Mike Enzi, our colleague who served the people of Wyoming and the people of America for 24 years in this body. We lost him a couple of months ago. I tried to get out to his beautiful State to say good-bye, and I couldn't. I couldn't rearrange things. I just—I miss him.

I was thinking about Mike this morning. I had a meeting over here early—not too early, about 8 o'clock. I walked from my little, overpriced Capitol Hill apartment, through the park, to the Capitol. The park I am talking about is just east of the Capitol. Mike would always walk through the park when he would come to vote. Not always, but many times he would leave his office and get his exercise and enjoy God's beautiful day by walking through the park. I walked with him a couple of times.

Mike was so many things, but if I had to describe him in three words, it would be "decent," "smart," and "one of the best fishermen I have ever known."

I want to talk about the decent part and what Mike Enzi meant to me. I mean, I can talk about his background and the fact that he was a giant among Senators and how everybody respected him, but everybody knows that.

When I first got here—I think all new Senators feel this way. The Members of this body are very, very smart, and they are very, very driven. And at least

for me, when I first got here, it was a very intimidating place. I think that is true for most Senators. I think if you ask all 100 Senators what it was like their first month here, 99 of them would tell you that they were intimidated. The 100th would be lying because this is an intimidating place.

But, you know, Mike went out of his way, I remember—I guess he could tell I was insecure—to reassure me. You know, every few weeks I would see him in the cloakroom or I would see him in committee, and he would say: Kennedy, you know, you are making a real contribution to this group.

Well, of course, I wasn't, but it made me feel so good and so more sure of myself. And it also made me realize, when I reflect back on it, what a decent thing it was for Mike to do. I mean, he had been here 24 years. He had his pick of chairmanship. I mean, he really was a giant in this body. I was green as a gourd, brandnew; and he didn't have to do that, but he did. I never told him how much that meant to me, and I really regret not telling him that now.

I feel so bad for Diana—just the most wonderful person in the world. I don't know Mike's children—Amy, Emily, and Brad—but I have a feeling, knowing that they are the children of Mike Enzi and Diana, that they are three wonderful Americans.

I just wanted to say that. I was thinking about Mike today. I miss him.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT TRAVIS SCOTT

Madam President, No. 2, we have an organization in Louisiana called the Public Affairs Research Council. It is one of our premiere think tanks. It is an independent group. They are not political. They do serious research, and they offer very serious suggestions about how we, in Louisiana, can solve some of our social and economic problems. We call it PAR, Public Affairs Research Council.

I don't know how long PAR has been around. As long as I have been in government, which is the late 1980s, it was there way before I came. I didn't have time to look up when it was founded, but I think it is pretty much 2 years older than dirt. It has been there. It is an institution in Louisiana.

It is privately funded. People who care about our State contribute money to do PAR's work. I religiously read all of PAR's white papers and research papers. Everybody I know who cares about my State takes their suggestions seriously.

To be the director or the president of PAR, it is quite an honor. It is a lot of work and it is a big deal. Our president of PAR is retiring. He is a friend of mine. His name is Robert Travis Scott, and I want to say a word about Robert.

Robert is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with high honors, a graduate of Johns Hopkins. He has done it all. Robert has been the president of PAR since 2011. But before that, he was the capital bureau chief for our Times-Picayune newspaper in

New Orleans, and that is how I got to know him. Robert was never an agenda journalist. And we know that those journalists, particularly in the print media, exist, and they exist in the electronic media.

I couldn't tell you today what Robert's politics are. I don't even know what party he is in. I don't know if he is in a party. He was always, when he was a reporter, a straight shooter. He called it like he saw it. He played it straight down the middle. And if he thought he ought to bust you upside the head because you did something dumb in public service, he would do it, but he didn't do it just in a gratuitous way.

So it was no surprise to me when PAR asked Robert to take over running the Public Affairs Research Council. And he did that. He has done it since 2011, 10 years. Robert and PAR have contributed so much to my State.

His replacement is going to be a gentleman by the name of Dr. Steve Procopio, who I know as well. Steve is going to do a great job. But we are going to miss Robert. I hope he doesn't go far.

I just wanted to come say a word about my good friend Robert Travis Scott.

TAX CODE

Madam President, now let me say one final word on a timely topic here.

As you know, our body is going to soon be considering, I think, some changes to our Tax Code. We don't know exactly what they are.

I just want to strongly encourage my colleagues and my friends—because I like everybody in this body—if we are going to make changes to our Tax Code, to make those changes on the basis of sound economic principles. Don't make them on the basis of class warfare.

Some of the proponents of some of the changes that I have seen discussed in the media, in my opinion, don't understand the complexity of the American economy. They just don't. They think of our economy as it was in primitive times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers.

In those days, in primitive times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers, the only value that was created in the economy that we had was labor. It was all labor. And then, in those days, when somebody became rich, they became rich by exploiting the capital of others.

In fact, that is what Marx talked about. Marx's concept of the economy was that the only value in an economy is work. And if you become wealthy in an economy, you become wealthy as a result of exploiting the labor of others.

So Marx agreed with this description of the—I want to say our medieval, but it was way before medieval times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers.

That is not the American economy today. The American economy today is the greatest economy in all of human

history because it is a marriage of capital and labor.

And capital and labor are not antagonistic. They work together. Now, it is not without friction. I understand that. But that is why we have become the greatest economy in all of human history. And when capital joins labor and the two contribute and play their own role, we are able to all work and save and invest and fund the research and development and do the innovative things that have given all of us the greatest quality of life in all of human history. So capital is not a bad thing; it is a good thing.

And there has been a lot of talk around here about billionaires—bad, bad billionaires; they are not paying their fair share. I have never completely understood how you determine what the fair share is of somebody.

Let me put it another way. I don't understand what the fair share is of what somebody else has worked for. I don't know what my fair share is of what Madam President's—what she has worked for. It is yours. You worked for it.

But that aside, this talk about the bad, bad billionaires and they don't pay their fair share and they are hurting our economy and they only got rich based on exploiting other people's labor, I think, shows a gross misunderstanding of the complexity of the U.S. economy and a gross misunderstanding of free enterprise. And I hope we don't lose sight of that as we go about the process of making changes to our Tax Code.

Let me say it again. If we make changes to our Tax Code, let's don't make them on the basis of class warfare. Let's make them on the basis of sound economic principles.

So congratulations to Robert Travis Scott from PAR. Robert, I hope you have a wonderful retirement. Don't be moving back to South Carolina or Baltimore or other places. Stay in Louisiana.

And, Mike, I miss you. Mike Enzi, I miss you.

I have heard it said before that—I didn't say this, now; I am just repeating it—most Senators believe in God, and the rest of them think they are God. Mike Enzi was in the former category. Just a great man. Smart, good fisherman. But most of all, he was decent.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF SAULE OMAROVA

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I rise today to discuss President Biden's nominee to serve as one of our Nation's chief banking regulators.

About a month ago, President Biden announced his intention to nominate

Cornell University Law Professor Saule Omarova to serve as Comptroller of the Currency.

I was on the floor recently, and I spoke about her nomination. And I noted at the time that she has been celebrated on the far left for promoting ideas that she herself has described as “radical.” It is one of the few things on which I agree with her. These are radical ideas. In fact, they are very radical ideas.

And most disturbing about this is they demonstrate—these ideas of hers—a very clear aversion to America's free enterprise system at a very fundamental level, despite the fact that our free enterprise system has produced an incredible level of prosperity and standard of living.

I have to say, I don't think I have ever seen a more radical choice for any regulatory spot in our Federal Government that I can think of than Professor Omarova. And let me be clear. That assessment is based on the things that Professor Omarova has written and said in her own words, often quite recently.

So today I want to focus on just one of the radical ideas that she presented in great detail in a paper that she wrote in 2016—not exactly ancient history. This is her plan to have the Federal Government set wages and prices for large sectors of the U.S. economy; in fact, the most important goods and services in our economy.

Under her plan, the Federal Government would designate—and these are her words—“systemically important prices and indexes” or “SIPIs.” She creates an acronym for these things; she calls them SIPIs—for the Federal Reserve to regulate.

So she details five different approaches, different ways, that the government could regulate and take control over these prices of these systemically important goods. And they are all—it is all a terrible idea based on the completely erroneous premise that somehow the government knows what the price of these things should be.

But among all of them, one that is maybe the most troubling is one that she describes here. And this is what Professor Omarova argued. She says: “The . . . final regulatory option we think worth considering is . . . price maintenance—typically within some band—through OMOs.”

Now, OMO stands for open market operations, and that is an operation that the Federal Reserve engages in. But the Fed uses open market operations—or OMOs, in Professor Omarova's lexicon—to just buy and sell securities for one purpose, and that is to manage the amount of money in the supply—in the economy, to manage monetary policy, to do it by managing the supply of money. That is it.

What Professor Omarova is advocating for is a radical departure from this very, very narrow and limited activity. What her plan would do is to empower the Fed—and these are her